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Claims:

1. Apparatus for performing electronic selection actions in response to receipt of or more special service messages, said special service messages arriving at a first port comprising:

a first module coupled to said first port for decoding said special service messages;

a ROT CPE port;

a switch interposed between said first port and said POT CPE port;

a second module, responsive to said first module, for controlling state of said switch based on information contained in said special service message; and

a signaling detection module responsive an off-hook condition at said POT CPE port for applying an off-hook detection signal to said second module.

- 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said special service messages contain called number information.
- 3. The method of claim 2 wherein said one or more special service messages are embedded in an alert signal.
- 4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said alert signal contains ringing signal bursts within a ringing cycle.
- 5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said second module includes an associated memory, and control said state of said switch based on information stored in said memory and information contains in said special service message.
- 6. The apparatus of claim 5 further comprising a clock coupled to said second module, to assist said second module in its control of said state of said switch.
- 7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein said clock generates time and date information.

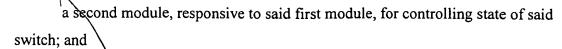
- 8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein a special service message comprises a coded ringing signal.
- 9. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a ringing signal generator responsive to said second module, for applying a ringing signal to said POT CPE port.
 - 10. The apparatus of claim 9 where said ringing signal is a coded ringing signal.
- 11. The apparatus of claim 9 where said ringing signal is coded to indicate
 - (a) whether said special service messages indicate that a connection with said apparatus is sought to be established to a called number that is listed in a directory that is accessible to everyone,
 - (b) whether said special service messages indicate that a connection with said apparatus is sought to be established to a called number that is unlisted in said directory,
 - (c) whether said special service messages indicate the calling number that seeks to establish a connection with said apparatus,
 - (d) time of day, or
 - (e) type of call.

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- 12. The apparatus of claim 11 where said type of call is taken from a set that includes collect call, cellular calls, international calls, fax calls, modem calls, and credit card calls.
- 25 13. Apparatus for performing electronic selection actions in response to receipt of called number ID signal arriving at a first port, comprising:
 - a first module coupled to said two terminals for decoding called number information embedded in said alerting signal;
 - a POT CPE port;
 - a switch interposed between said first port and said POT CPE port;



a signaling detection module responsive an off-hook condition at said POT CPE port for applying an off-hook detection signal to said second module.

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- 14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said called number information is embedded in an alerting signal in the form of ringing signal bursts within a ringing cycle.
- 15. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a display responsive to said second module.
- 16 The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising an off hook detector connected to said first port, for applying an off hook detection signal to said second module.

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17. The apparatus of claim 1 where said first module detects called number information in said special service message.

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18. The apparatus of claim 1 where said special service message is in the form of digital information preceding, or following a first ringing signal burst.

19. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said second module compares information decoded by said first module from said special service message to one or more pre-stored numbers within said second module.

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- 20. The apparatus of claim 19 where said first module detects a special service message that includes a number to be stored, and causes said second module to store said number so as to include said stored number among said one or more pre-stored numbers.
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- 21. The apparatus of claim 20 where said number to be stored arrives at said second module in the same signaling format that all other special service messages have.

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- 22. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a second signaling detector, responsive to signals from said POT CPE port, for receiving a number to be stored in said second module.
- 23. The apparatus of claim 22 where said second signaling detector is responsive to DTMF or pulse signaling from said CPE.
 - 24. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a hardware address.
- 25. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said special service messages indicate
 - (a) whether a connection with said apparatus is sought to be established to a called number that is listed in a directory that is accessible to everyone,
 - (b) whether a connection with said apparatus is sought to be established to a called number that is unlisted in said directory,
 - (c) the calling number that seeks to establish a connection with said apparatus,
 - (d) time of day, or
 - (e) type of call.
 - 26. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said type of call is taken from a set that includes collect call, cellular calls, international calls, fax calls, modem calls, and credit card calls.
 - 27. Apparatus for performing electronic selection actions in response to receipt of one or more special service messages, said special service messages arriving at a first port, comprising:
 - a first module coupled to said first port for decoding said special service messages;

an plurality of POT CPE ports;

a plurality of switches, with each switch interposed between said first port one of said POT CPE ports; and

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numbers.





a second module, responsive to said first module, for controlling state of said switch based on information contained in said special service message.

- 28. The apparatus of claim27 further comprising a signaling detection module responsive an off-hook condition at said POT CPE ports for applying an off-hook detection signal to said second module.
 - 29. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein at least one of said switches is a normally closed switch.
 - 30. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein at least one of said switches is a normally open switch.
 - 31. Apparatus for performing electronic selection actions in response to receipt of called number ID al arriving at a first port comprising:
 - a first module coupled to said first port for decoding special service messages embedded in said alerting signal;
 - a series connection of a ringer and a ringer switch, across said first port,
 - a series connection of telephone circuitry and a hook switch, across said two terminals; and
 - a processor, responsive to said first module, for controlling state of said ringer switch.
- 32. A method for responding to an alert signal that contains an embedded called number ID in an alerting signal comprising the steps of:

identifying said called number ID in said alerting signal;

comparing said called number ID to at least one pre-stored number;

ascertaining whether at least one other call attribute is met; and

applying ringing signal bursts to a POT CPE port when said at least one other call attribute is met and said called number ID matches one of said at least one pre-stored

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- 33. The method of claim 32 where said step of comparing compares said called number ID to a plurality of pre-stored numbers.
- 34. The method of claim 32 where said at least one call attribute includes any one or more from a set that includes caller ID, called number ID, time of day, date, and type of call.
- 35. The method of claim 34 wherein said type of call is taken from a set that includes collect call, cellular calls, international calls, fax calls, modem calls, and credit card calls.
 - 36. The method of claim 32 where said at least one call attribute includes any one or more from a set that includes caller ID, called number ID, and time of day.